



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **Former Serbian concentration camp guard removed from U.S.**

BOSTON--A Bosnian national who served as a guard at a Serbian concentration camp in 1992 during the Bosnian war was deported on August 3. Pero Popovic, formerly of Stoneham, Massachusetts was one of twelve guards assigned to the Susica camp near the village of Vlasenica, eastern Bosnia during the period of ethnic cleansing of Muslim Bosniaks in the region by Serb forces.

Popovic served under the command of Dragan Nikolic who in 1994 was the first war criminal indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for crimes against humanity – persecutions on political, racial and religious grounds; murder; rape; torture. The indictment alleged Nikolic was responsible for deplorable conditions in the camp that housed 8,000 Muslim civilians and other non-Serbs between May and October 1992. The camp building was severely overcrowded, detainees were not provided anything to sleep on, toilet facilities were limited and food was sparse and often spoiled. The guards brutally beat the detainees on a daily basis, according to the indictment, some of whom died as a result of the beatings. The indictment further stated that many of the detained women were subjected to sexual assaults, including rape. In a plea agreement in 2003, Nikolic admitted individual criminal responsibility in the murder of nine individuals. He was sentenced to 23 years imprisonment, which was reduced to a period of 20 years on appeal.

Popovic came to the United States in 1994 following a series of articles in the New York Times by Roger Cohen, who had met POPOVIC following his desertion from the Yugoslav army. Popovic has never been charged with any crimes in connection with his activities as a camp guard in Susica. He was ordered removed from the United States by Immigration Judge Leonard I. Shapiro in October 2005 and has been in the custody of U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) since that time.

The apprehension of Popovic is the latest accomplishment under ICE's ongoing initiative to identify, apprehend, prosecute and remove human rights violators. ICE attorney's are currently tracking and litigating more than 700 cases involving human rights violators from more than 85 countries worldwide. ICE encourages the public to come forward with any information they may have regarding human rights abusers residing in the United States. Tips can be reported at 1-866-DHS-2ICE.

The case was a joint effort by ICE's Human Rights Violators and Public Safety Unit, created in 2003 to ensure the United States does not become a safe haven for human rights violators, and ICE's Human Rights Law Division.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*